

Heterosexual Privileges

Heterosexual privilege refers to the benefits that heterosexual people automatically have and are often denied to lesbians, gay men, transgender and bisexual people in a heterosexist culture. The benefits may be social or legal. LGTB people are likely to run into heterosexual privilege on a daily basis. While some of these privileges are relatively small, the cumulative effect over time of the lack of access to such privileges can be a source of considerable stress.

Here are some examples of the heterosexual privileges:

1. You can freely talk about your family's life and important relationships to colleagues at work, school, spiritual community, etc.
2. You can kiss your partner farewell at the airport, confident that onlookers will either ignore you or smile understandingly.
3. You can be pretty sure that your neighbors where you live will be friendly, or at least neutral.
4. Your families and community are delighted to celebrate with you the gift of love and commitment.
5. You can walk into any bookstore, sure that you will find books relevant to your life experiences.
6. When your partner is seriously ill, you know you will be admitted to the intensive care unit to visit him/her.
7. The books that your children read in school reflect families like you and your peers.
8. You can find appropriate cards for your partner to celebrate special occasions.
9. You grew up thinking that your loves and friendships were healthy and normal.
10. You can go out with your partner and your children, pretty well assured that your status as a family will not be questioned.
11. If you experience violence on the street, it will not be because you are holding hands with your partner.
12. You can choose accommodation when you travel without having to worry about being accepted as a couple with your partner.
13. When one of you dies, the other can be confident of the support and understanding of family, colleagues, community and friends.
14. Your partner is welcome to attend office parties, school dances, etc. with you.
15. You have always known there are people in the world like you.
(As in, straight)